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ARTICLES
OF
Faith and Practice.
AND
THE COVENANT

OF
The Churches of Christ composing
the Maritime Baptist
Convention.

*It is recommended that the Covenant,
on page 14, be read at the Confer-
ence Meeting, the Members
standing and assenting.*

BAPTIST BOOK AND TRACT SOCIETY,
HALIFAX, N. S.

Note by Publishers.

1st. The Articles of Faith and Declaration of Polity here printed, are those formerly published by the late Stephen Selden, slightly revised. The phraseology has been in some instances changed, unnecessary proof texts removed, and some new ones added. The numbering of some sections has been changed so as to simplify matters, as for example : Part II., Sections 3 and 6. Words, and sometimes sentences, which seemed irrelevant or unnecessary, have been omitted.

2nd. These Articles and Declaration are, like the former published independently, and have no binding authority on our churches.

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ARTICLES
OF
Faith and Practice

PART FIRST.—ARTICLES OF FAITH.

ARTICLE 1. There is but one only living and true God, who is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being; wisdom, power, holiness, justice, love and truth. Deut. 6 : 4 ; John 4 : 24 ; Psalm 90 : 2 ; Jer. 10 : 10 ; Isa 6 : 3 ; Exodus 34 : 6, 7.

2. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, who are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. Matt. 28 : 19 ; 2 Cor. 13 : 14 ; 1 Pet. 1 : 2 ; 2 Thess. 2 : 13, 14 ; Tit. 3 : 4-6.

3. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, in which He hath given us our only rule of faith and practice. 2 Tim. 3 : 15-17 ; John 5 : 39 ; John 20 : 31 ; 2 Peter 3 : 16.

4. God, who is infinite in knowledge, and perfectly views all things from the beginning to the end, hath fore-ordained that whatsoever comes to pass, either by his order or permission, shall work for the eternal glory of His great name. Acts 15: 18; Rom. 9: 17, 23; 11: 36; Acts 2: 23; Ephes. 1: 11; Rom. 8: 28.

5. In the beginning God, through Christ, created the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that in them are; and He upholds and governs all things by the word of His power. Gen. 1: 1; Exod. 20: 11; Heb. 1: 3; Daniel 4: 35; John 1: 3, 10; Col. 1: 16.

6. God made man in His own image and after His own likeness, in holiness righteousness and knowledge, and gave him dominion over all the lower orders of being. He also gave him a restrictive commandment, the keeping of which secured him life, the penalty for transgression being death. Gen. 1: 26-28; 2: 16, 17; Ps. 8: 6-8; Rom. 5: 12; 6: 23.

7. Man being left to himself and sorely tempted, soon fell from that perfect condi-

tion by eating the forbidden fruit, by which he brought himself and all his posterity into a state of suffering and death. Gen. 3 : 1, 6, 17-19 ; Rom. 5 : 12-19.

8. Man being thus dead, his help and recovery are wholly in and from God. Eph. 2 : 1, 8 ; John 6 : 44 ; 3 : 3, 7, 8 ; Gen. 3 : 15.

9. God the Father hath chosen a great multitude of the human family, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, and given them to His Son, that He might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Thereby the ministers of the Lord are encouraged to preach the gospel to every creature; because, the purpose of God and the infinite value of Christ's atonement, secure the increase and establishment of His kingdom, so that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. Rom. 8 : 29, 30 ; Eph. 1 : 4, 5 ; 3 : 11 ; John 6 : 37-39 ; Rev. 7 : 9 ; Titus 2 : 14 ; Mark 16 : 15 ; 2 Tim.

1, 9; 2 Tim. 2 : 19; Jer. 31 : 31; Heb. 8 : 6; Rev. 11 : 15.

10. Jesus, the eternal Son of God, hath come, and taken on Him our nature, and in that nature hath yielded a perfect obedience to the law which we have transgressed. He suffered death for our sins, and hath brought in a complete and everlasting righteousness, and hath risen and ascended to the right hand of God, and ever liveth to make intercession for us.—

Heb. 10 : 5-10; Rom. 4 : 25; Heb. 7 : 25; John 20 : 14-17; Acts 1 : 9.

11. The Holy Ghost, and He only, can and doth make particular application of the benefits of the atonement made by Christ to every elect soul. The Spirit of God applies the benefits of this atonement, by convincing us of our sinful, lost, and miserable condition; and then discovering the glorious Saviour, as He is exhibited in the gospel, in His suitableness and sufficiency, and enabling us to embrace Him with our whole souls, by which He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Rom. 5 : 5; 1 Cor. 1 : 30; John 3 : 5-8; 16 : 7-15; Acts 2 : 33.

12. The life of religion consists in (a) the knowledge of God and conformity with Him in the inward man, which produces (b) the external conformity to His commands, and brings us to live in obedience to His holy will in all our ways. John 17 : 3 ; Matt. 23 : 23-26 ; Eph. 2 : 10 ; Tit. 2 : 11-14 ; 1 John 5 : 13.

13. True believers, being united to Jesus Christ, shall never perish, but live and reign with Him for ever. They have communion with God, and by His Spirit they are united with each other, and have communion one with another, whereby they are made partakers of each other's gifts and graces. John 3 : 15, 16 ; 10 : 28 ; Rom. 8 : 17 ; 1 John 1 : 3 ; Rom. 1 : 11 ; Phil. 1 : 7.

14. The first day of the week, commonly called the Lord's Day, is the Christian Sabbath. Mark 2 : 27, 28 ; Matt. 28 : 1-6 ; John 20 : 19, 26 ; Rev. 1 : 10 ; Acts 20 : 7 ; 1 Cor. 16 : 2.

15. God hath appointed the ordinance of civil government for defending the poor as well as the rich in their civil rights,

without infringing upon the consciences of any, or attempting to dictate or govern in the worship of the eternal God, which belongs only to Jesus Christ, the great Lawgiver and Head of His church. Rom. 13 : 1-4 ; 1 Pet. 2 : 13-15 ; Luke 22 : 25, 26 ; Eph. 1 : 22.

16. There will be a general resurrection, both of the just and the unjust. God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, and will reward every man according to his works ; when the wicked shall be sent away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous received into life eternal. John 5 : 28, 29 ; Rom. 2 : 6 ; 14 : 10-12 ; Matt. 16 : 27 ; 25 : 31-46 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 3-58 ; 2 Cor. 5 : 10 ; Heb. 9 : 27, 28 ; Rev. 20 : 12, 13.

*PART SECOND.—CONCERNING A
VISIBLE CHURCH OF CHRIST
AND ITS DISCIPLINE.*

1. A church of Christ is a number of His saints, voluntarily and understandingly covenanting together, for upholding and promoting the worship and service of God, to show forth His glory, and for their own edification. 1 Peter 2 : 5 ; 1 Cor. 1 : 2 ; Acts 2 : 42-47 ; 4 : 23, and 13 : 1 ; Heb. 10 : 25 ; Eph. 4 : 15, 16 ; Rom. 16 : 16.

2. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Christ, to be continued until His second coming, and the former precedes the latter ; that is to say, those are to be admitted into the communion of the church, and to partake of all its privileges, who upon profession of their faith, have been baptized, that is immersed, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Matt. 3 : 6, 16 ; 28 : 19, 20 ; Acts 2 : 41, 42 ; 8 : 12, 36-39 ; 16 : 15, 33 ; 1 Cor. 11 : 23-26 ; Romans 6 : 4 ; Col. 2 : 12 ; Eph. 4 4-6.

2a. Since none but true believers can rightly partake of the ordinances, therefore the door of the Church should be carefully kept against all such as cannot give scriptural evidence of their union with Christ. Matt. 7 : 6, 15-20 ; 1 Cor. 11 : 27, 29 ; 1 Peter 2 : 5.

3. A church thus gathered has power to choose, and by elders to ordain those officers that Christ hath appointed in His church, viz. : Bishops or Elders, and Deacons. Acts 1 : 21-26 ; 6 : 3-6 ; 14 : 23 ; Titus 1 : 5.

3a. A Bishop or Elder hath no more power to decide any case or controversy in the church than any private brother; yet Bishops, having superior gifts for teaching and ruling, ought to exercise and improve the same for the benefit of the church; and the church ought to be subject to the gifts bestowed on the minister from the Lord, while he is rightly administering in his place. The duty of the Elder is to preach the gospel of the grace of God, to lead the church in all holy enterprise, to administer the ordinances of the gospel, and to devote

himself to the work of teaching, warning, rebuking, and exhorting the people, publicly and from house to house. 1 Peter 5 : 3 ; Matt. 13 : 52 ; Acts 20 : 20, 28, 31 ; 1 Thess. 5 : 12, 13 ; Heb. 13 : 17 ; John 21 : 15, 16, 17 ; 1 Cor. 16 : 16 ; 2 Tim. 2 : 14 ; 4 : 2.

3b. The Deacon's office or work is to take care of the poor, and to have the oversight of the temporal affairs of the church ; to minister at the Lord's table, and to defend and advance the faith.— Acts 6 : 1-5, 8, 10 ; 7 : 2-53 ; 8 : 5, 29-40 ; 1 Tim. 3 : 8-14.

4. The church, in its collective capacity, has power to depose such as walk contrary to the rules of the gospel, and to discipline their members, though in some such cases it may be convenient and profitable to request the advice of neighbouring churches of Christ. Matt. 18 : 15-18 ; Acts 15 : 1-31 ; 1 Cor. 5 : 11-13 ; Rom. 16 : 17 ; 1 Thess. 5 : 14 ; 2 Thess. 3 : 6, 14.

5. Every believer is commanded to be faithful, to improve every gift and talent which is bestowed on him ; in order to

which there ought to be such gospel freedom that the church may know where every particular gift is, that it may be improved in its proper place, and to its right end, viz.: the glory of God and the good of his people; and the church ought to be subject to such improvements. 1 Peter 4: 10, 11; 5: 5; 1 Timothy 4: 14; 1 Cor. 13th and 14th chapters; 16: 16; Romans 12: 4-8; Ephes. 4: 7-13.

6. There is a mutual obligation between minister and people; the former to administer in things religious and spiritual, according to the gifts God has bestowed; the latter to communicate of their temporal or worldly substance for his comfort and support, and that by an equality as nearly as can be ascertained, that one may not be burthened and another eased. This is not to be effected by force or compulsion, but it is to be a freewill offering agreeably to the Scriptures of truth. 2 Cor. 8: 12-14; Luke 10: 7; Romans 15: 27; 1 Cor. 9: 1-14; Gal. 6: 6.

7. Every member is under obligation to be active in the Church. To this end it is

essential that he or she should have membership in the Church near their place of abode. Such a person removing from one place to another should, *without delay*, join the Church there, and use his utmost endeavours to aid the cause of Christ in the community. Rom. 12 : 1, 6-8, 11 ; 15 : 2,

The Covenant.

WE do now, in the presence of the great all-seeing and most glorious God, and before angels and men, solemnly enter into covenant with the Great Head of the Church, and with one another, promising in humble reliance upon Divine help to walk together in Christian love, to watch for one another's welfare, to remember one another in prayer, to comfort one another in sickness or distress, to be ever slow to take offence, ready to forgive, and eager for reconciliation.

We also promise to labor and pray for the temporal and spiritual prosperity of this church; to attend regularly its services, sustain its doctrines, ordinances and discipline, to contribute freely of our means for the payment

of its expenses, for the relief of the poor, and for the spread of the gospel at home and abroad.

We also engage to maintain the habit of daily devotion, and to make earnest efforts for the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances ; to be honest in our dealings, truthful in our statements, faithful in our engagements, temperate in our habits and circumspect in our deportments, "thus striving to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world."

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